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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

INFORMATION REPORT

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25X1A2g

COUNTRY Germany (Berlin)

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SUBJECT Progress of the SED Membership Purge

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1. The purge of the SED ranks which was announced in September of 1948 has as yet been unsuccessful. The Screening Commissions ("Überprüfungskommissionen") have not met the deadlines set by the SED Landesvorstand Berlin for the completion of their work. Dismissals from the party have not been great in number, and have for the most part resulted from the individual dishonesty of members rather than from unreliability as determined by the Screening Commissions. Current membership figures for one of the western-sector SED Kreise are quoted below as an illustration:

Membership as of 30 November 1948	1,292
Membership as of 31 January 1948	928
Dismissals during this period	100
Resignations during this period	315
Admissions during this period	51

The resignations appear to indicate no one general trend. Individual apathy and laziness, dissatisfaction with party leadership, and the feeling that membership is not profitable, are all contributing factors. Those resigning have included some veteran SED members as well as comparative newcomers.

2. To supplement the limping work of the Screening Commissions, and to side-step the basic question of whether the SED should be a mass party or a "Kader" party, the creation of "Aktive" party is being pushed by the party leadership. In a move apparently planned to support the "Aktive" party has recently been announced that party members may be reclassified as party candidates. Some time ago the practice of taking applicants for membership directly into the party was abandoned in favor of a flexible system of candidacy and probation. Under this system applicants initially receive party candidates' books rather than party books, and are actually made party members only after demonstrating their willingness to work. Instructions now are that a

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party book and be redesignated as a candidate. In this way the party hopes to strike a compromise which would retain only activists in full membership, but which would avoid losing the dues and, at least, the passive allegiance of the inactive masses in the party.

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